

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 /043 W

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R 021403Z DEC 77

FM AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2269

AMCONSUL ANTWERP

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: EAIR, ATRN, CG

SUBJECT: AIR SERVICE TO LUBUMBASHI

1. IT HAS NOT BEEN ONE MONTH SINCE CLOSING OF LUBUMBASHI'S LUANO AIRPORT TO HEAVY TRAFFIC (I E LARGE AIRCRAFT OF OVER 50 TONS, 737'S, DC-8'S AND DC-10'S) ON NOVEMBER 1 BY GOZ'S AIR CONTROL AGENCY, REGIE DES VOIE AERIENNES, BECAUSE OF NEEDED MAJOR REPAIRS TO AIRSTRIP SURFACE. SINCE NOVEMBER 8, AIR SERVICE TO LUBUMBASHI HAS CONSISTED OF 737 FLIGHTS FOUR TIME A WEEK BETWEEN KINSHASA AND KAMIN'S MILITARY AIRSTRIP WITH FOKKER F-27 SHUTTling PASSENGERS TO AND FROM LUBUMBASHI. DESPITE SOME MINOR WORK UNDERTAKEN BY AIRPORT PERSONNEL SUCH AS FILLING IN POTHoles AT ONE END OF AIRSTRIP, NO REMEDY FOR REPAIR PROBLEM IS IN SIGHT.

2. CONSULATE SPOKE WITH LOCAL CONTRACTOR VICTOR FORREST NOVEMBER 30 ABOUT AIRPORT SITUATION AND LIKELIHOOD HIS COMPANY WILL MAKE NEEDED REPAIRS. FORREST IS ONLY LOCAL COMPANY WHICH HAS UNDERTAKEN AIRPORT REPAIRS IN RECENT PAST. FORREST EXPLAINED THAT GOZ OWES HIM OVER
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\$6 MILLION FOR WORK PERFORMED 1971-1976 PORTION OF THIS DEBT IS FOR PREVIOUS REPAIRS MADE AT LUBUMBASHI AIRPORT. SINCE AIRPORT HAS CLOSED NOVEMBER 1, GOZ HAS PAID \$300,000 AND HAS RECENTLY EXPRESSED INTENTION TO MAKE PAYMENT FOR ANOTHER \$1.1 MILLION. FORREST MADE IT KNOWN THAT EVEN IF HE WANTED TO BEGIN WORK, IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE AS GOZ'S OUTSTANDING DEBTS TO HIM

HAVE REDUCED HIS LIQUIDITY TO WHERE AN ADVANCE PAYMENT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DEFRAY INITIAL CONSTRUCTION COSTS. CONSULATE HAS HEARD THAT ONLY OTHER POSSIBLE CONTRACTOR, VICTOR SWANEPOEL, WHO NORMALLY SPECIALIZES IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION, ALSO INSISTING ON ADVANCE PAYMENT BEFORE INITIATING ANY REPAIR PROJECT.

3. IN THE PAST, "DANGEROUS PASSAGE, HORROR STORIES ABOUT KINSHASA-KAMINA-LUBUMBASHI SHUTTLE AROUND. BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT 737'S CARRY ABOUT 100 PASSENGERS WHILE FOKKERS ONLY CARRY 35. ONE RUMOR IS THAT REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL COMMISSIONERS BOTH LOSE THEIR BAGGAGE ON RETURN FROM PR CONFERENCE. PASSENGERS STRANDED AT KAMINA HAVE HAD TO WAIT UP TO SEVEN DAYS AT KAMANI AIRPORT WHERE FOOD AND LODGING FACILITIES ARE PRACTICALLY NON-EXISTENT. MANY LUBUMBASHI-BOUND PASSENGERS HAVE BRAVED THE THREE DAY TRAIN TRIP FROM KAMINA RATHER THAN WAIT FOR ONE OF THE FOKKERS. PROBLEMS ENGENDERED BY EXISTING SERVICE WILL PROBABLY MULTIPLY AS HOLIDAY SEASON APPROACHES. ALTHOUGH AIR ZAIRE MAY ATTEMPT TO AUGMENT SERVICE.

4. CONSULATE AGAIN RECOMMENDS THAT VISITS AND SHIPMENTS TO LUBUMBASHI BY COMMERCIAL MEANS BE CURTAILED. BORG

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
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